

[A Tough One]

Interview

[W. M. Emery]

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c 1785 words

A TOUGH ONE

"I guess I've worked with a hundred or more bandits and outlaws," said Albert Easley, "And I found them to be the finest bunch of fellows in the country to work with. They use to come down here to the IOI Ranch and work and rest when the Law was getting too close to them, then all of a sudden they would pack up and leave and go back to their business again.

"But they were a jolly, generous bunch. They'd do anything in the world for you if they liked you. They could take a joke better than lots of men, and were always ready to play some prank on someone. Of course you couldn't ask them too many personal questions, and you didn't want to get serious when you were joking them. Some of them were pretty tough characters, too, but we never had a killing on the IOI Ranch.

"I remember one man, whom one of the boys came in and announced a new settler fifteen miles away, jumped up and said, 'I'm leavin'. This country's getting too d—n close for me'. They had their principles, too. Maybe a little less high than a lot of folks, but not broken half as often. They gambled, but not with kids. They drank whiskey, but would not give a kid a drink. Try to find somebody in tho'se businesses now who does that way. C/8 - 6/5/41- N. [Mex?]

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"But the toughest fellow that I ever saw was a boy about twenty-two. I was working for the pitchfork Ranch up above Folsom, when this kid came in and started to work. He was a pretty good hand, but he was always bragging about how tough he was, but I figured that a fellow who was always bragging about how; tough he was couldn't be very tough, because really tough men didn't as a general thing — brag about their toughness. But he turned out to be just as tough as he said he was.

"One day he wanted to go to the Cottonwoods to get some whiskey.

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Mr. Drew was running the store there at that time, and it was just a Mexican Plaza.

I told him that I couldn't go but if he wanted to go to start out, and if he brought back any whiskey I might help him drink it.

He was gone a couple of days. When he got back he was just having a big time over the way he had corraled the Mexicans of the Plaza, in the store, and kept them there all the time he was in the Plaza. I never thought much about it at the time, but a few days later I saw Mr. Drew and he told me that the fellow had really done just that, and every time one of them stuck his head out that boy' knocked sand in his eyes' (he shot so close to the Mexican that he dug up the sand around his feet, and it flew in his eyes.)

After he had worked about six weeks, I had to go to Trinidad for supplies. Rufus (his name was Rufus Rough) wanted to go with me. He rode horseback and I went in the buckboard. As we started up Frijole Hill, we met two Mexicans hauling wood. That boy jerked out his gun and began shooting between the burro's feet. those two Mexicans were scared to death. They tumbled off of their loads of wood and literally rolled down the side of the hill. The Burros ran away scattering wood in every direction. I never saw anyone laugh as hard as that boy did.

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When we got to Trinidad he hunted up Dr. Owens and asked for his time. After he had spent most of his money in Trinidad, he went to work for the [H Ts?], a big outfit over on the Picketwire, below Trinidad.

A man named Johnson was boss of that outfit, and he and Rufus didn't get along from the start. One day they had a quarrel and Rufus shot Johnson in the hip. tho' cowboys shot Rufus, and laid him out in the bunk house, for dead. They put his gun in his bed roll, and went outside.

But Rufus came to, got his gun out of that bed roll and crawled to the door and began shooting at tho'se boys, before they knew what was happening.

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They surrounded the bunk house and recaptured Rufus, then they took him out and hung him to a high tree and shot him full of holes. They made sure he was dead that time.

"That boy was the toughest one person I ever saw."

Told by Albert Easley to writer.